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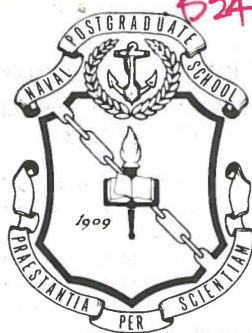
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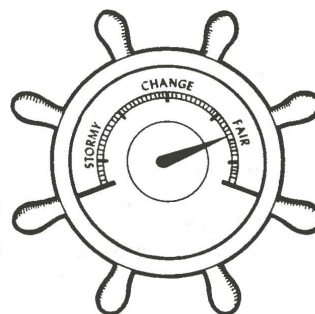


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THE BAROMETER



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SMC #2034

The BAROMETER is a student newspaper for the exchange of ideas and information concerning the development and improvement of the professional environment at NPS and within the U. S. Navy.

OFFICERS, FACULTY, STAFF and WIVES
are invited to contribute articles
of interest to the BAROMETER,
c/o The Editor.

GUEST EDITORIAL: "Doesn't Freedom of the Press Include Patriotic Obligations?"

by David Lawrence

(Reprinted from U. S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT, January 24, 1972 issue)

When in the midst of critical times in our history official documents are stolen and furnished to the press or important papers are "leaked" by individuals in Government who perhaps wish to start a wave of criticism against persons in positions of responsibility whose decisions may not be to their liking, the press is described as obligated to print whatever comes into its hands no matter by what method - theft or otherwise.

Even though the documents that are "leaked" or distributed to the press may contain the texts of confidential messages between our Government and foreign governments, publication nevertheless ensues. The people are told, in effect, that it is necessary because the Administration is withholding the truth from the public or is deliberately lying.

But is this a responsible system? Must it be assumed that the press has a duty to publish everything it receives without regard to how harmful it may be to our country or whether the data may have been obtained by improper means?

In recent weeks, there have been news reports about discussions among the President's group of advisers concerning the situation in India and Pakistan. As often happens, there were varying views, and important messages were exchanged with our representatives abroad.

Just who "leaked" the information and documents about the differences of opinion between the President and some of his advisers has not been revealed. But it is evident the concept that "news is news" ruled the day, and the impact on the evolution of foreign relations of the United States in the future was ignored.

Certainly the press should be free to print whatever news can be obtained in a legitimate manner, and it should have opportunities to attend background sessions and gather all the information available about developments in the news. But to publish documents illegally acquired raises a question of ethics on the part of the press.

Every citizen, including the writer for newspapers or radio or television, has an obligation to consider his country first. To publish documents without authorization can do a great deal of harm to the conduct of foreign policy, especially in times of crisis.

It is argued that the American people have "the right to know" and should immediately be given all the facts no matter how injurious this might be to governmental activities. But surely it is not necessary for unauthorized documents to be used in reporting news, particularly when obtained in an unlawful way.

It so happens, moreover, that much of the material that has been "leaked" has been fragmentary. The public has not, in fact, been told the whole story. The few documents that have been disclosed give only one side of the case, and certainly the press should understand the need to wait for the time when both sides can be presented.

In the middle of a critical stage of international negotiations such as are going on now, for example, with respect to the future of Pakistan and India, it is not helpful to cast doubts upon the unity inside our own Government in its determination to pursue a course of cooperation in Asia in order to bring peace. It is not a time for disruptive tactics by the news media.

The press performs an important function in America. It is free to print what it pleases. But there are grave doubts whether official documents that are stolen should be published. There are questions also whether quotations from governmental papers should be accepted and made public when dissatisfied persons within the Government turn them over anonymously to some reporters for publicity purposes.

The press has a responsibility to serve the interests of the United States. To print unlawfully obtained documents is a disservice to the Government and to the people. It is an act in disregard of the patriotic obligations which should come first with the press as well as everybody else.

Shall it be said that the duty of the press to the reader supersedes any patriotic obligation or that fidelity to groups or factions is more important than loyalty to the United States?

How can our system of government function if freedom of the press means freedom to print stolen documents when this can only increase the troubles of an Administration and make more difficult the carrying out of its policies at home and abroad?

Allegiance to one's country should outweigh all other considerations. It could mean at times a voluntary withholding of publication of certain news which can injure the public interest.

Free institutions are essential to the enjoyment of a free government and a free society, but the top priority of the individual citizen always should be loyalty to his Government above all else.

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Grading Systems: A Modest Proposal

Doctor Johnathan Swift would be proud of the following proposal which throws a new light on the grading system question which has been of concern lately.

Letter to the Editor (LT J. S. Stewart, USN)

The article by Profs Gawain and Lindsey in the January 24th issue indicated that there is some concern in the academic community about the increased demands on faculty members under the proposed new grading system, as regards their ability to fairly and precisely distinguish between the various levels of grades which may apply to a given student. The old system it seems did not hold as many pitfalls for the grade-giver since it did not include plus and minus levels of performance. The operational system on the other hand dispensed with this hair splitting entirely. In as much as none of the three systems is entirely acceptable to all those concerned I felt compelled to offer a fourth system, with all the ills and all the good points of all the present and proposed systems, as a sort of panacea.

This system is based on a number of colors of the spectrum. To establish a common ground for discussion I will tie it to the old A, B, C, D, I system, although no direct Relationship should exist to the old letter grade - G. P. A. system.

Blue would correspond to an A, Green to a B, Yellow to a C, Red to a D and Violet to incomplete. The immediate implication for the student of any of these colors is clear:

Blue; a healthy, tranquil state in which to reside
Green; somewhat less tranquil but surely acceptable
Yellow; cause for extreme caution
Red; a signal for either extreme academic agitation or a complete halt to academic endeavor.

As in the operational system the student and teacher can make a clear determination of the students performance, e.g. if you're doing well you're "true blue", etc.

The professor loses no latitude in grading. Individually biased grading curves could be attributed to a preference for one color or another, or complete color vision failure. The lack of an exact definition for any of the four major grades is no more serious nor important either, as compared with present systems. If, however, more refinement was required and for those that like to manipulate a series of grades, we could allow the mixing of the basic four to produce the equivalent of the plus and minus grades of the proposed new system. This, of course, carries with it the same problem of determining fine differences. Telling a good blue-green from a high greenish-blue is probably just as difficult as is distinguishing between A and B+ work, particularly on a hazy Monday morning.

There can be some separate, significant advantages to this color system;

- a) The inconsistent student at some stage in his tour would have collected grades which when taken together would produce brown, a grade not even found on the list. He could be weeded out pronto.
- b) The marginal students' transcript would take on the color of sea water which would serve as a constant reminder to him of the ever-present alternative to postgraduate education.
- c) A grade of yellow would cause increased resolve in any man and certainly no officer at this institution would want to find himself labeled a red.

Finally the color system does have a stellar attraction which the other systems lack. Assuming it could be adopted, it would be safe to further assume that a high degree of confusion will again arise where education and grades are concerned. In that event all we need do is to collect all the possible grades and shove them through a prism backwards. By the laws of nature then, this should shed some clear new light on whether grades or information transfer should play a bigger role at N. P. S. All the discussion about the existing and proposed systems, seems to have failed in this regard.

Item for the Barometer (LT. R. D. Jones, USN)

Your readers might be interested to know Op-03 has begun publishing The Surface Warfare Newsletter. It is Confidential. The Library has two copies. We received the first issue on board on the 16th of February.